Outdated rail bridges

416. SHRI NANDI YELLAIAH: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of rail bridges declared outdated particularly in Andhra Pradesh and the measures taken to replace/repair them during the last five years;

(b) whether in order to caution the concerned operational personnel about the state of rails, his Ministry propose to issue mobile phones to the Gangmen who inspected tracks;

(c) if so, by when mobile phones would be issued to them all over the country; and

(d) the measures taken for timely maintenance of rail tracks and passenger safety?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) There is no categorization of Railway bridges as outdated. Railway undertakes repair, rehabilitation/rebuilding of bridges on the basis of their physical condition as ascertained during annual inspections and not on the basis of age. Few bridges which may show signs of deterioration of physical condition indicating need for rehabilitation on priority are classified as Distressed Bridges. Depending upon nature of defect and classification the repair/rebuilding/rehabilitation of such bridges is taken up on priority.

Total No. of bridges rehabilitated/rebuilt during last five years is approximately 5667. Such statistics are not maintained, State-wise.

(b) and (c) Mobile phones have not been provided to gangmen and there is no such plan. However, on some zonal Railways Walkie-Talkie sets are provided to patrolmen patrolling the railway track during emergency.

(d) The following steps have been taken, for improving safety on Indian Railway as far as track is concerned.

(i) Regular inspection of track at various levels is undertaken.

(ii) For monitoring track geometry and running characteristics of track sophisticated recording cars and oscillograph cars are being used.

(iii) Training to railway staff is provided immediately after their recruitment and thereafter their knowledge is refreshed periodically. Seminars/workshops/field demonstrations are also organized for Permanent Way staff from time to time to enhance/update their knowledge.

(iv) Patrolling of Railway track by gangmen is carried out at vulnerable locations during monsoon, summer and winter.

(v) The specifications of rail steel have been upgraded and are in conformity with the International Union of Railways (UIC) specifications.

(vi) Ultrasonic Flaw Detectors are used to detect hidden flaws in the rail.

(vii) Mechanized maintenance of track is being introduced progressively, for better and improved maintenance.

(viii) The track structure is being upgraded on a planned basis.

(ix) To keep the track in good condition, track renewals are carried out whenever it becomes due for renewal subject to availability of funds.

Booking of materials on ticket

417. SHRI TARIQ ANWAR: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that booking of materials on ticket has been closed by the Parcel Department of Indian Railways;

(b) if so, the reasons for this closure;

(c) whether it is also a fact that many a times, luggage bogies go without luggage due to which the Ministry faces financial losses; and

(d) whether he has directed the concerned for starting booking of materials on ticket also?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELLU): (a) Commercial items are not permitted to be booked on luggage